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ant battle for its share of circulation under the managership of famed Louis D. Taylor. The World featured sensational banner headlines (in red), had pioneered in weekend colored comics (which were better than those of today) and generally crusaded fervently on behalf of labor and the underdog. All this, no doubt helped Louis Taylor to ultimately become eight times mayor of Vancouver (complete with bodyguard) and also assisted him to build the Empire's tallest and ugliest) building, the World building, which now houses the Vancouver Sun. It was Louis Taylor of the World who fought the court battles with the Canadian Pacific Telegraph, which in a measure resulted in the formation of the Canadian Press wire service.

On the staff of the World at the time were the Norcross brothers, editor J. Edward ("Jedward") Norcross and his younger brother, Norman, a reporter.

Across the older Norcross' desk, a month after the Jackson inquest, came a letter from a Kamloops reader, 81-year-old Jesse Betts, inmate of the provincial home in that city. Betts had followed the newspaper account of the Jackson inquest with a good deal of interest for he had some knowledge of the Jones family. He had written because he was of the opinion that Mrs. Jackson lied at the inquest when she described Harry Fisher as her nephew. He was her son, said Betts, and Theresa's brother. Therefore Theresa lied when she swore in court that he was her cousin. It seemed a trifle, with little bearing on the more important matter of Jackson's sudden death. But to J. Edward Norcross (who was to become the dean of Vancouver journalists) small details were important.

"Better grab the next train for Kamloops and see this old fellow Betts," was his brief injunction to his brother Norman.

When Norman returned at the end of a week he had quite a story to tell. It started back in Madison, Ohio, in 1892, when John and Esther Jones, with son Fred and daughter Theresa left for the west, to settle on Vancouver Island. At that time, said Jesse Betts, he was working on the 100-acre farm of pioneer Saanich farmer William Foot, on the west side of Glanford Avenue between Royal Oak and Seven Oaks. Foot was fairly well fixed, and owned in addition 93 acres at Lansdowne and Richmond, on part of which the Provincial Normal School was subsequently built. A Dorsetshire man, old Foot had been over 40 years on the Island, his land titles dating from the Hudson's Bay Company, back as far as 1856.

HOWEVER, by the nineties, he was ailing, and finally in his latter few years, completely bedridden. Which left Betts with sole management of the Glanford Avenue farm.

Then one day Mr. and Mrs. Jones, who were near neighbors, put in an appearance, with the suggestion that they run the Foot farm on a profit-sharing basis. To this Foot consented, and the Jones family moved in. As Betts was then about 70, Jones had no need for him and it was a rather disgruntled old servitor who had to pack up and leave. He went to Denman Island to live, and while he was there read in the Victoria Colonist how 19-year-old Fred Jones, Esther's son, had broken into the office of a Major Wilson in Victoria and stolen some cheques. He forged the endorsements and tried to cash them at the Bank of British Columbia, but a quick-eyed teller noticed something wrong and called Wilson. Fred Jones was caught out at his caper and drew three years in the B.C. Penitentiary.

Later, in November, 1897, Betts read that his old Saanich friend, Bill Foot, had passed on. A few weks later he saw in the paper that Mrs. Jones was in court for fraud; she'd been charging up a lot of groceries to Foot's estate, and the executors, Fred Pemberton and a lawyer called Potts, were quick to take exception. They did more. They yanked her into court. But the case was dismissed. Then Mrs. Jones took after Pemberton and Potts for false arrest, and that case was dismissed, too.

A year or two later Smith died, which was about the time Jesse Betts moved to Alberni. Dropping in one day at the Arlington Hotel for a meal, he was surprised to find that Mrs. Esther Jones was acting as housekeeper and daughter Theresa was a waitress in the dining room.

At that time the hotel was under the management of Tom Jackson, Harry Fitzgerald and A. La Belle. It was apparent to Betts that Jackson was head over heels in love with Theresa, and soon the couple were married and honeymooned in Seattle. On their return, Jackson seemed to find it hard to settle down, especially with the vivacious Theresa who yearned for a good time. Tom apparently started drinking too much, and finally so neglected the hotel business that his partners bought him out.

About this time another member of the Jones family appeared in Alberni; young Fred, who preferred to be called Henry Fisher, although privately he addressed Esther Jones as "mother." Of course, Jesse Betts knew him before in the Saanich days, but wondered about the name switch. Remarking about it to Mrs. Jones, she said she didn't want people to know that her son was the Fred Jones who'd been in prison. Fisher, she said, was her maiden name, and she asked Betts to keep the matter quiet in Alberni.

LATER ON Jesse Betts fell on evil days, and finally penniless and with no one to turn to, he was admitted to the Old Man's Home at Kamloops.

Norman Norcross seemed to have come up with quite a little information, which "Jedward" Norcross promptly communicated to Vancouver's chief of police, Sam North. He, in turn, immediately got in touch with Victoria's police chief, J. M. Langley. Result was a mug picture of Fred Jones, the forger, went over to Vancouver in the mail, and settled the question. Harry Fisher was Fred Jones, which fact . . . due to the current interest in the Jackson-Jones case . . . the World lost no time in running on the front page, omitting the source of its information.

No sooner was the paper on the streets than Mrs. Jones, her daughter Theresa, and son Fred stormed into editor Norcross' office threatened the full limit of the law in a libel action.

Temporized Norcross, "If you feel so sure of your ground, why don't you let me have statutory declarations from each of you setting out your proper relationship. I'll be glad to print it by way of denial." He added, as an afterthought, "Your sworn statements will get the same prominence in the paper as the allegation."

"You bet it will," snapped Mrs. Jones, "and I want them printed in two successive issues!"

"In two successive issues," nodded Norcross in agreement.

A commissioner for taking oaths was called in, and three documents were sworn to. Mrs. Jones declared that Harry Fisher was her nephew; Theresa swore that he was a cousin; and Fred Jones swore that Esther Jones was his aunt. The declarations ran on the World's front page for two successive issues.

It seemed to be the cue for Chief North to go into action and Mrs. Jones and her daughter were arrested on a prejury charge. But Fred Jones (alias Harry Fisher) was nowhere to be found. A phone call to the border, however, intercepted him at Blaine. Apparently Harry (or Fred) was a little out in his accounts at the Granville Street store.

Sergt. Jimmy Walker of the Victoria police went over to the mainland and visited Fred Jones in the lockup at Blaine, and positively identified him as the man who'd done three years for forgery, a man who'd also called Mrs. Esther Jones "mother" when she called at the city lockup with his clothing. Next, the attorney-general got in touch with Supt. of B.C. Police Fred Hussey, and this resulted in Provincial Constable Colin S. Campbell of Vancouver heading immediately for Madison, Ohio, to check into the Jones family background. In a week or so he returned with copies of birth certificates, and two witnesses who could identify Fred Jones or Harry Fisher as Mrs. Jones' son, and Theresa was his sister. Another witness was William Peden, of Victoria, who could testify that when he occasionally hunted pheasants over the Glanford Avenue property, when the Jones' were in charge, Fred Jones addressed Mrs. Jones as "mother."

JOE MARTIN, KC, appeared for Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Jackson at the court hearing on Jan. 2, 1906. Mr. Martin, of course, has his own particular niche in B.C.'s hall of fame. As probably the most contentious and disliked figure ever to hold the post of attorney-general. Despite his argument that the mistake in Fred Jones' identity at the inquest was a mere slip of the tongue, without bearing on the main issue, the women were committed for trial. Later they elected for speedy trial, and in the meantime Fred Jones, with fast legal aid (from Joe Martin), got himself uncoiled from the meshes of the law at Blaine on grounds that prisoners held for extradition had to be in custody of a U.S. marshal, and the nearest marshal was at Seattle. Once free, Fred Jones fled for regions unknown, and was never heard of again.

There were postponements in the Jones perjury case until Const. Campbell could get back from Ohio with his witnesses, but finally the case was heard in February, 1906. It resulted in Mrs. Jones getting a year in jail; her daughter drew nine months.

It wasn't long before spring came again to Vancouver and with it the inevitable assize and Mrs. Jones' rendezvous with sea captain Sprague over the matter of a stolen receipt. Doctors, however, reported to the court that Mrs. Jones was much too ill to make an appearance. She was emaciated and thin, they said, hardly eating anything and in a highly nervous state. The case was postponed again, to the fall assize.

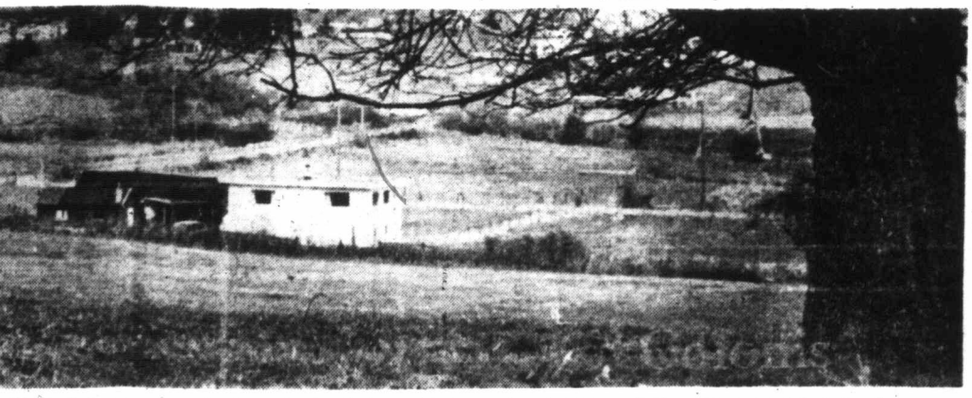
In August, Theresa was released, and a couple of weeks later her mother's sentence was commuted on the grounds of ill health. Although she was released on the perjury charge, she was still out on bail on the theft charge.

Came the October assize and again Esther Jones was too ill to appear and the case was put over to the next assize and another spring. Truth was the insurance company was taking its time settling the Jackson claim, just in case any further evidence developed. Esther, by her dietetic antics, was also stalling . . . until the cheque came.

On May 2, 1907, Chief Justice Gordon Hunter took his seat on the bench at the Vancouver assize and Mrs. Jones' name was called.

"Esther Jones" went the cry, echoing through the courtroom and down the courthouse corridors. There was no answer to the summans, and Mrs. Jones' two bondsmen each forfeited $400.

There was no answer to the courtroom summons for the very good reason that at that particular moment two women, both attired in black, both silent and haggard, a mother and daughter, were aboard the Great Northern train rapidly approaching Seattle. With them was $2,500 in cash, proceeds of the long-delayed insurance claim and something else . . . the key to the riddle of Thomas Jackson's death. A secret that perhaps would haunt both of them to the end of their lives!



Glanford Avenue where the Jones family first came to the notice of old Jesse Betts—who exposed their fraud.